



Adam Interviews Anne Kress

By: Adam Chodak

Posted: May 25, 2017 10:24 PM EDT

Updated: May 25, 2017 11:59 PM EDT

ROCHESTER, N.Y. (WROC-TV) - Few have a greater say in Rochester's future than Anne Kress.

The MCC president co-chairs the group behind Finger Lakes Forward, an initiative to revitalize the Finger Lakes region.

"Finger Lakes Forward is our Upstate Revitalization Initiative Plan and it captures what we think is going on," Kress said. "The Finger Lakes is moving forward because of intentional investment by the state, but also because that investment has been matched by private dollars, you need private investment to sustain it and we think we see that in the Finger Lakes."

Kress's group is the one that puts together the pitch each year for state money through Governor Andrew Cuomo's well-known competition.

"We have a strategic plan where we've identified 3 main industry clusters, optics, photonics and imaging, food and agricultural sciences, and also food processing and then we have a catchall which we call next generation manufacturing and technology so that's everything from energy storage technologies to new technologies around information," Kress said.

As noted in a previous interview with Danny Wegman, the group's other co-chair, one focus for the last several years has been investing in the Eastman Business Park, but there has also been money funneled to North American Brewing, the company that makes Genesee Beer across the river from High Falls.

High Falls is the area to which Kress is moving MCC's downtown campus.

She expects the facility inside what was unused space in Kodak's headquarters to open soon.

Many are hoping the move does what other projects have failed to do: breathe lasting life into High Falls.

"I'd like to claim all credit for you it, but what's amazing about the Finger Lakes plan and you look at North American Brewing and you see the role they're playing and starting that eco-brewing district and how that relates to the entire eco-district within High Falls and there I think you have a perfect project because you have an existing business that now is recommitted to the community, is expanding its operations, is expanding its tourism component with the brew house, is looking to see how it could move more individuals out of poverty and into prosperity, by hiring people from the low-income neighborhoods that directly surround that plant and full disclosure they're also providing some scholarship dollars for some students to go to MCC to upscale so they can find work, that in a nutshell is what we're looking for in Finger Lakes Forward," Kress said.

While Kress co-chairs this group and serves as president of MCC, she is also raising kids and keeping a seemingly omnipresence on the charity circuit.

Asked how she holds it all together, Kress said, "I talk to many involved mid-career medical professionals at the University of Rochester Medical Center and I always tell them, you're going to let some balls fall to the ground because you can't juggle everything, your goal in life is just to be the one who decides which one they are, if you can figure that out and later you can scoop it up and drop something, and you can't keep it all going otherwise."

Danny Wegman, who was sitting next to her during the interview, at this point interjected saying, "I've never seen her drop a ball."